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A Christian View of Life

REV. RALPH H. BORNMAN



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REV. RALPH H. BORNMAN

A Christian View of Life

Devotional Discourses

BY

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(Muhlenberg College and Moravian Theological Seminary)

PASTOR OF ST. JOHN'S U. E. CHURCH

ALLENTOWN, PA.



"One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple."—PSALM 27: 4

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no 1

THIS VOLUME
IS DEDICATED TO THE
MEMORY OF MY SAINTED MOTHER
AND THE DEVOTION OF MY
AGED FATHER, WHO HAVE SACRIFICED
THEIR LIVES TO EQUIP ME FOR
THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

PREFACE

BELIEVING that the salvation of my fellow men is the highest motive of life, I have been moved, by the prompting of God's Spirit, to put forth an effort toward the advancement of this end. May God bless the message to the hearts of my readers, in the hope that it may accomplish the purpose whereunto it is sent.

RALPH H. BORNMAN

Alburtis, Pa.
August, 1923

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A Christian View of Life

CHAPTER I LIFE'S PERSPECTIVE

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."—MATT. 6: 33.

THE opening of every year brings with it new thoughts, new hopes, new aspirations. It is that time of the year when a new start is taken in every vocation and walk of life. It is like the dawning of another day when the sky of the past night changes into the brightness of the rising sun. It is like the awakening out of the sleep of the past night into the freshness of another day. It is like casting off the garments of the past night and putting on the apparel of the day. It is for this reason that the new year is the appropriate and suitable time for setting up standards and ideals in the form of resolutions, expressing the purpose and the desire of our heart for the year before us. The opening of the new year is the most proper of all times of the year in which to set before us the goal of our life; to

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establish a definite aim to which our life shall aspire; to determine what shall be the controlling motive that must govern all our thoughts, all our actions and the final outcome of the course we choose.

Realizing, therefore, the important significance of the beginning of another year, what is the aim of our life in this new year? In order that our life may not drift through this new year in an aimless course, it becomes necessary for us to have a goal to which our life shall tend. In order that our life this year shall not be wasted, but be given to proper use, it becomes necessary for us to determine the channel in which our life shall flow.

The life of every man is a search, a seeking, a striving for the attainment of a certain end. Christ most keenly felt this natural tendency in man, and so He has furnished us with the most lofty aim to which any man may ever hope to aspire. Christ never failed to meet the desire and the longing of the human heart. For every worthy and noble craving in man, Christ ever furnishes abundant satisfaction and fullness of joy.

In order, therefore, that man may gratify every high and holy desire, Christ has set before us an aim

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that is deep as the heart; wide as the world; and high as the heaven. There is no higher, more fascinating, and more worthy goal upon which any man may set his affections, than that presented by Christ when He said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." Herein is encompassed the whole ocean of human ambition; for who can measure the infinite joy in seeking the kingdom of God? Commendable as are the many resolutions the new year again has borne, none is to be compared in grandeur and fame with this supreme aim, as handed down the ages by Christ the Lord. Our Lord never dealt with trivial, unimportant matters, and hence when He emphasized the "Seek ye first," we may take it for certain that He meant it to be the most important aim of all the attainments of life.

The word "first" is indicative of the lasting importance to which our text would lay claim. All other aims, to which any man may ever rise, are second in esteem to the supreme aim of the kingdom of God. Christ was well aware of the falsity of man's judgment, and hence He focused attention upon the order of time as based upon the significance of His teaching. Christ raised the importance of our text by numeri-

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cally placing it first among a long list of worthy ideals. How then can we escape the immensity of the claim this text makes upon our life, when Christ Himself gave it such a commanding position as first above all else? If Christ the Lord regarded this goal of life with such a great degree of esteem, as to give it such a paramount position, surely no man can afford to under-rate and overlook the keen attention it deserves in our consideration.

The very first word "seek" at once arrests our attention. Christ stresses the act of seeking as a vital condition in reaching the kingdom of God as our aim in life. The kingdom of God is an object to be sought; a prize to be won; a treasure to be possessed. It is an enterprise which has wrapped up in its boundless store enough mystery, enough inducement, enough satisfaction to engage the whole life of man in one continual search. O, the depth of the riches, both of wisdom and knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord! How unsearchable are His judgments! This short span of life will not be long enough within which to reach the unfathomable depth of the kingdom of God. Nay, for we shall spend all eternity in seeking and learning more of the boundless wisdom, overflowing

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riches and matchless joy of the kingdom of God. Christ, in setting before us this wonderful aim, has given us an inexhaustible source of wealth, which any man may acquire through a diligent search of the Holy Scriptures; through spiritual meditation; and through an unbroken communion with the Father in heaven. All of this Christ reflected in the words "seek ye" as indicating our duty over against so great a reward. No one can ever hope to lay hold on God's kingdom, who fails to realize, that seeking for it is the main and first care of every man's life. Till a man comes to this state, his life is a life of revolt and sin; and he is at war with the universe and himself. Seeking after the kingdom of God involves interests of surpassing and infinite importance. Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of this life and of that which is to come. Wherefore, Christ declares that seeking after His Father's kingdom must receive the first consideration in our life.

The preceding verses reflect the adverse feeling man sustains to this supreme aim of Christ. These verses set forth the preferences man holds over against this fundamental requisite. Earthly possessions and the cares of this life are the great concern which blind

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our view to the larger and more important perspective of life. In the time in which our Lord lived, property consisted largely of linen and embroidered goods. To have a large store of these was the ancient Jewish notion of wealth. Christ, in looking at the large piles of linen and embroidered goods, said: "Take care that the moth does not get into this goods; do not forget that consuming insect, else all your wealth will soon be gone."

In the time in which our Lord lived, treasures were largely hidden in the earth. Men would dig a pit in the field and there hide their most valuable possessions. Jesus Christ, looking at the man filling up the earth with his treasure, said: "Remember the rust; what you put into the earth is exposed to danger; you may cover it up very carefully, but the rust will get at it." In the time in which our Lord lived, houses were largely built of mud, so that a thief could easily bore his way through this mud wall and get at the treasures hidden inside. Jesus Christ, beholding the man building his house with mud, said: "Take care, it is only mud; remember, the thief can easily break through your mud defense and lay hold upon your stored treasure." Christ said: "The riches, with which

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you men are concerned, can be eaten by the moth; can perish in the earth; and can be stolen by the thief." Therefore, lookout for the treasures that are subject to anxious thought and countless worries. That which you have in your hands can be taken out of them; therefore, seek for something better, that cannot perish or be taken from you.

Having this fact well established, Christ points to the impossibility of setting two goals before us, which He expresses in saying, "No man can serve two masters." Slavery figured very prominently in the time in which our Lord lived. Christ frequently beheld many slaves surrounding Him, and pointing to them, Christ said: "No slave can serve two masters." A slave was the earthly possession of his master, just like houses and land. And so belonging only to one master, a slave could, therefore, only serve one master at one time. Wherefore, Christ concluded in saying, "No man can seek after My Father's kingdom and with the same mind seek after the kingdoms of this world, Choose ye therefore whom ye will serve and what ye shall seek, inasmuch as it is impossible for any man to reach two goals and obey two masters."

It is a part of the confusion with which this world

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of ours is crowded that the order of things has been seriously inverted. The wrong thing done at the wrong time and in the wrong place, very often takes the place of the right thing, which should be given the right of way. Christ plainly foresaw this human difficulty and therefore purposed to throw light upon it by giving us this inspiring text. One of the great purposes of the Holy Word of God is to correct and re-establish our perverted notion of things, by telling us what is of first and second importance in our life. If we hearken to the dictates of our own wisdom, without consulting the inspired word of God, we shall be misled like the blind leading the blind. In our text Christ gives us one of the many instances of how the word of God rectifies human calculation, by impressing upon us what is the first care of a man's life; by guiding our thoughts toward the true perspective of life.

In the immediately preceding verses, Christ points to the wrong view of that which constitutes the main care of a man's life. Christ rebukes this view in saying, "Wherefore, take no thought for your life, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. For after all these

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things do the Gentiles seek.” Our main concern in life shall not be centered upon these temporal things, for Christ said: “Your heavenly Father knoweth you have need of these things.”

Rather, we are first to make sure of heaven, by making heaven our end and a holy life our way. This is the aim upon which Christ would center our life. Let your first thought be that of making sure of heaven. Let nothing interfere with your life until you have made sure of heaven. Be resolved in this new year to have your life's perspective be that of making sure of heaven, by seeking to live a righteous life, such as exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees. Seek the things of God and whenever the things of this world come into competition, remember to which we are to give the preference. The best way to be most comfortably provided for in this world is to be most intent upon the world to come.

Christ adds: “Where your treasure is, there is your heart also.” It could not be otherwise. This teaching is so plain, that it scarcely needs any further explanation. We at once recognize the treasure of our life to be the magnetic attraction of our heart; therefore, Jesus would have the treasure spiritual. Christ assures

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his children as does the psalmist that he is our shepherd and that we shall not want any good thing. Christ gives perfect assurance that the heavenly Father is not unmindful of things that we need, and that he will provide them. No one enjoying the matchless communion with the Infinite God, doubts this great truth for a moment. Our whole discourse Christ concluded in saying, "All these things shall be added unto you." This promise is based upon the condition of establishing, as our life's perspective, Christ's words, when He said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." God's standards of life are highest and hence God takes a second place in no man's heart. One must make God first or claim no promises. We then begin at the right end of our life's perspective when we begin with God.

Seek God first every day. Let your first waking thoughts be of God. Let this be our principle in life, in resolving to do that first which is most needful. Let God, who is the first, have the first consideration in our life.

CHAPTER II

LIFE'S PURPOSE

“To this end was I born.”—JOHN 18: 37.

INTRODUCTION—In Maeterlink's exquisite play, entitled “The Blue Bird,” there is a beautiful scene of the unborn babes of the future, waiting to be brought to earth. They are seen crowding toward the ship of Old Father Time, clamoring to be taken aboard. Each holds in a tiny hand the commission it has been given to execute in this earth. One is commissioned to be an artist; another a poet; another a sculptor, and so on from the greatest even to the least of them. This poetic scene is a vivid illustration of the great truth, namely, that the Creator has endowed each individual with certain talents and gifts, which He expects man to develop to its utmost capacity.

* * * * *

EVERY person has a certain end or purpose in view, which he hopes to attain some time in life. Each has a certain longing and desire to be and to do something. “Where there is no vision the people perish.” We all

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as with a prophetic eye look as far as possible into the future vision of life. This we do because we realize that everything is here for a definite and specific purpose. Look wherever you will and you will not see anything in God's whole universe that is not here for a definite purpose.

Listen to every little creature. The fly as he hums; the bee as he buzzes; the bird as he chirps; the ant as it crawls, and the spider as it spins—listen, and all seem to tell you, "To this end was I born."

Behold the lifeless objects of nature; the silent witnesses of the love of God. The small blade of grass, as it gives all that beautiful green covering; the flower to beautify and purify; the tree to shade and bear fruit; the brooklet to water the land; the stone to strengthen and build; the sun, moon and stars, as they shine forth in all their radiance and glory—behold them and all seem to tell you, "To this end was I born."

This suggests that all of us are here for a certain purpose. Each is destined for something. Each has a certain place to fill in life, which no one else can fill. God has something waiting for every one of us; somewhere at some time; something that just suits for you

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and me, so that we with all nature might say, "To this end was I born."

Let us pass back to the day of the ancients and we shall find that each was born to perform a certain work. Abraham was born to be an example of faith unto all generations. Noah was born to build the ark and thereby save humanity from being washed from off the face of the earth. Joseph was born to save the land from starvation and thereby became the savior of his own people and race. Moses was born to lead the children of Israel into the promised land. David was born to be a warrior and thereby fight in behalf of God's people. Solomon was born to execute wisdom and justice. Queen Esther was born to save her own distinct people from the hand of the persecutor. Mary and Joseph were born to bring up, nurture and maintain the Saviour of the world. Jesus Himself, the greatest of all human beings, was born to do good, to suffer and finally to be nailed to the cross that you and I might be saved from eternal torment. And so all of these and many more, if they were here today, would tell us, "Even so to this end was I born."

Friends, like these venerable personages of old, we also are born unto a certain end. The first thing

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to do in order to attain that end is to find our place in life; that place where God intends us to be; that place where we are suited best and needed most.

A young man, applying for a license to preach the gospel, was asked by the bishop as to what his conviction of his call to the ministry might be. The young man replied, "I had a dream and therein I saw two letters—they were P. C." "And what did they mean to you?" was the forthcoming reply, whereupon the young man answered, "That meant to me—preach Christ." The bishop, hesitating for a moment, finally replied, "Might that not also have meant plow corn?"

The finding of one's place in life is one of the greatest problems confronting man, but it can be solved if we, like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, place our life into the hands of God.

Not until we have a vision of the end for which we were born will we find self-satisfaction, true happiness and ultimate victory. The happiest man is he who has caught the vision of his life purpose, and lives with God as friend with friend.

We cannot all be kings, leaders and men of popular applause with Solomon, David and Samuel; but some must fill the humble places in life with Jesse, Hannah

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and Gideon. Suppose a half-dollar should refuse to be used because it can only do half as much as the dollar; foolish coin you would say, and rightly so. Suppose I decline to do my part in life because I can do only half as much as some other man; foolish man you would say, and rightly so. Honor the position in which God has placed you, and don't wait for it to honor you. If you cannot do what you like to do, then try to like what you are doing. Remember, God often has a great share in a little house and a little share in a big house. Friends, may we be content with the lot assigned to us by God, and with His Son Jesus say, "Even so to this end was I born."

Then with Moses we must be prepared for the task, which God has waiting for us. We may not as yet be ready to serve our purpose in life. The photographer takes his sensitive plate into a dark room, there to develop his picture. Before that process it is not yet ready to serve its purpose. So God often draws the curtain upon us and there in the darkness He brings out some rare beauty in our lives. O, friends, may we meet with God in the bush, and there ask the Master for Peter's hook to bring up the fish; for David's staff to guide the sheep aright; for David's sling to

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meet our giant foe; for Gideon's torch to light the way, saying with all sincerity of purpose, "Even so to this end was I born."

Then being prepared for the task God has waiting for us, may we with Joshua be determined to succeed in that with which we are entrusted. We must feel that we are capable of challenging that which we are suited for in life. A man cannot fail who believes in himself. To see what is right and then to be able to do it, is the most severe of all tests. If a man is not able to stand alone upon his feet; alone on the lofty peaks of serenity, unruffled by the storms of opposition, he is every man's man but his own. A man must be true to his ideals and he must endeavor to lift up the multitude to his ideals, if he knows he is in the right, instead of descending to their point of view. To succeed we must remain moderate at all times and under all conditions and not go to either extreme, should fortune favor or frown us. One way to get ahead and stay ahead is to use a head.

Lastly, may we with the Apostle Paul, learn to persevere in that with which we have been entrusted, even unto the end. We must not become tired of our lot, but stick to it through thick and thin. The

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postage stamp when placed upon an envelope will stay with that envelope until it has reached its destination. It stays with its job; it sticks to its purpose. Look at the stamp upon an envelope you just have received. You will see upon it marks indicating that it has accomplished the purpose for which it was intended. Even so we, as human beings, should be marked by goods all along the way of life, indicating that we are accomplishing the purpose that God has in our lives.

We owe it to God to fulfill the end whereunto we were born. There was a time when you and I stood upon the slave block of sin. Some are standing there now. The occasion was the auction of souls. The world and Satan were bidding for our souls. Then suddenly upon the scene came a man with a crown of thorns upon his head. He also offered to buy our souls and made a full and complete purchase, even with the dear price of his own precious blood. As we look back upon this scene we hear Him saying unto us, "I gave My life for thee; what hast thou given for Me? I left My home for thee; what hast thou left for Me? I bore bitterest agony for thee; what hast thou borne for Me? I brought salvation, full and free, to thee;

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what hast thou brought to Me? This I have done for thee; what hast thou done for Me?"

O, for a more purposeful life, stimulated not by selfish motives, but by the deepest emotions of the Holy Spirit, which make for the triumphant ideal of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. O, for a life that absorbs the highest possibilities of which it is capable, in the service of the Master. O, for a life against which it cannot be said, "Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting." Moreover, "Only an armor bearer, proudly I stand; waiting to follow the King's command. If in the battle to my trust I'm true, mine shall be the honor in the grand review." Be this our vision, as—

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,
And cast a wishful eye,
To Canaan's fair and happy land,
Where my possessions lie."

CHAPTER III

LIFE'S CALL

"The Call for Christian Patriots."—MARK 1: 17. "Follow thou Me."

ALL through the ages human beings of every description, class and nationality have clung to some creed, practice or custom. If we travel through the pages of history, even from the beginning of time, we shall find, only to our natural expectation, that men always have paid due allegiance to some cause. Whether right or wrong, men always have and ever will be followers of some cause. This is so because all of us are inclined by nature to follow some direction, some course, some path of life that tends to lead to a certain end. Every one follows some program, some daily schedule, be it in the social, business, domestic, professional or in whatever walk of life, each follows some definite plan.

In view of this fact men have persuaded men to be followers of various beliefs and practices. Calls of every imaginable kind have through the ages been extended to men all over the world. Some of these

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calls have succeeded in attracting to their summons large groups of men, while other calls failed in their fond enterprise.

Among the many calls extended to us during our life, there arises out of the mist and gloom of them all one clear distinct call, such as was never before spoken by men; a call that does not come in the busy turmoil amid the loud sounding of the trumpet, but a call only capable of being heard in the stillness of night when the mind instinctively turns to the only true and living source of existence—the merciful and infinite God. Out from the heavens above there comes a call for loyalty to the cause of righteousness and truth; loyalty to the cross on which the Saviour died; loyalty to the church which the Saviour purchased with His own precious blood; loyalty to the example He Himself set for us to pattern after; true and faithful to all that is right and just, whether of church or state, and, finally, in showing enough Christian patriotism as to feel it none other than our sacred duty to win men everywhere and at all times unto the saving knowledge of Christ.

Quite apart from Christian patriotism, yet closely related thereto, is that unmistakable loyalty to one's

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country and fellow men; something that indeed is not exclusive, but is tightly interwoven with Christ's high ideal as expressed in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. Therefore, we must give the temporal loyalty to one's country due attention in the effort of bringing the one to bear on the other, so that both are made to work hand in hand.

As Americans we take pride in alluding to the outstanding feature in our nation's history, which we know to have been that of gaining and possessing the freedom of worshipping God and doing as our conscience bids us with the ultimate realization of those famous words expressed by Lincoln: "A new nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created free and equal." To this high ideal we as true Americans hold fast with determined perseverance of remaining loyal to that for which our fathers fought and died. It is implanted in the heart of the youth and preserved in the mind of the aged.

Similar in nature is that patriotism demanded of us by God, who suffered His own Son also to fight and finally die for the preservation of righteousness and eternal salvation for men everywhere. Great as is the allegiance we are duty bound to render to our beloved

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land of freedom, yet the call of God for Christian patriots is far greater in its reach and end. Linked in with this eternal chain of freedom is that of the Christian patriot. The burning torch of liberty is being handed down from patriot to patriot, but it dare and must not pass from the hand of the Christian patriot, who is the backbone of this glorious land of freedom. Take the Christian patriot away from the helm which guides our ship of state, and America will no longer be that nation under God whose government is of the people, for the people, and by the people, never to perish from the earth.

The Christian patriot is the only hope of America if she is to live up to her high ideals and remain true to her mission in leading men into the triumphant kingdom of Jesus Christ. The world is in sore need of a Saviour and it is the Christian patriot to whom the world looks to give it that Saviour. O, if we Christians but knew of the many that are waiting for us to free them from the bondage of sin, we would be nobler and truer patriots of the cross of Jesus Christ. No greater patriotism has ever been known than that of Christ, who remained true to His mission given Him from God the Father, even unto the bitter death on the cross.

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Before going farther we shall establish firmly in our mind what we mean then when we speak of patriotism in the real sense of the word. We are told in the language from which the word is derived that it means the holding fast to that founded by our forefathers and, secondly, remaining loyal thereto without regard for the constant changing of things. Having this clearly fixed in mind we at once are convinced that such a thing as patriotism is needed in the Christian life. If it is necessary in the case of a country, why should it not be the more needful in the kingdom of God? If patriotism is essential in dealing with any cause, why should it not be much more essential in our relation to the greatest of all causes—the eternal salvation of all men everywhere? If we are in duty bound to stand with the head of our United States, is it not much more our most sacred duty to stand up for the greatest of all heads, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

If being deeply concerned with the interests of our nation is a real indicator of our patriotic spirit and loyalty thereto, is it not of far greater need to be interested in the immediate concern of the spread of God's kingdom here on earth? If we are judged according to the way in which we do our daily work,

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will we not be judged the more according to the degree to which we have the greater business of the King at heart? Are we having the King's business at heart to the same extent to which we have our own selfish interests at heart? Does our business and pleasure receive all our attention, while the more important work of the Master must drag along? O, it is lamentable to see how poorly the vineyard of the Lord is kept by us as His husbandmen.

Did you ever think what the Lord would say if He were to come today to inspect the vineyard which He has given to our charge? We know not when our Lord may come to the keepers of His vineyard and ask them to give a strict account. The Lord's vineyard of today is badly neglected. The present day is in sore need of true patriotic husbandmen. That is what we mean in the Christian sense of being a patriot.

Today God is calling for Christian patriots; for good husbandmen who will faithfully discharge the duties of taking care of His vineyard here on earth. Who will answer the call? Who will say, "Here am I, send me"? How often we repose in the pleasures of this world, not caring about the spread of the gospel until

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suddenly we are struck by the Father's voice, saying, "What doest thou here, Elijah? Get thee up and be gone; work in My vineyard, for I have need of thee there." Why stand we as idlers in the marketplace when all of us are needed to bring in the ripened grain? Behold the harvest is white for the reaping, but where are the laborers?

My message is God's call for Christian patriots; men and women upon whom He can depend; into whose hands He can entrust this sacred work of being husbandmen in the vineyard of the Lord. Behold the call is heralded throughout the world, "Who will work in my vineyard; who will consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?" It is service willingly and voluntarily offered that God is looking for. Who will volunteer to be a Christian patriot and go and labor in the Lord's vineyard?

For a moment may we look at some men whom God called, paying special attention to the answer these men gave God. Moses was called while tending a flock of sheep belonging to Jethro, his father-in-law. God called him out of the midst of a burning bush, saying, "Moses! Moses!" He responded by saying, "Here am I!" Samuel was called while asleep with the old

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prophet Eli. God called him out of the midst of his sleep three times, saying, "Samuel! Samuel! Samuel!" He responded, saying, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Jonah was called while in rebellion against God. He refused to take heed thereto, fled by ship to Tarsish, was thrown into the sea, swallowed up by a whale and there, finally, in the belly of the fish, he responded to God, promising Him to go over to that great city of Nineveh and preach God's word.

Matthew, the tax collector, was called while sitting at his receipt desk. Jesus, upon passing by, saw him and said unto him, "Follow Me," and straightway we are told that he left his desk and followed the Lord. Cornelius, the centurion, was called in a vision about the ninth hour of the day. The Lord called him through an angel, who came to where he was, saying, "Cornelius, arise for the Lord has need of thee." He responded in fear, saying, "What is it, Lord?" Paul, the apostle, was called while on his way to Damascus with the idea of persecuting the Christians. God suddenly appeared unto him in a great light shining round about him from heaven, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Paul, trembling, in astonishment, said, "Who art Thou?" and the voice

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came back to him, "I am Jesus who thou persecutest." Then Paul, in deep humiliation and sorrow, responded, saying, "What wilt Thou have me to do?"

Ah, friends, as these venerable men of old were called by God, even so today we are called by the selfsame God to work in His vineyard. The call is ever the same—the saving and winning of this world over to Christ and His kingdom. God calls men with as great a force as He called Abraham, Isaac and Jacob of old. God called; God-fearing men and women are needed today to lead the mad rush of the world to the feet of Jesus; yea, they are needed just as much as they were needed in the days of the Israelites to lead them into the promised land. God, throughout all ages, has raised up and called men in His own special time and manner to perform a certain work for Him. God called Luther to reform the age in which he lived. He called John Knox, Zwingli, Calvin, Wesley, Wyclif, and others too numerous to mention, to be reformers of the world. Coming down closer to our own country, God called George Washington to be the founder of this great republic. Lincoln, God called to be the savior of this same republic; and so all down the march of the ages, God called men and they cheerfully responded.

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We also are called. What shall we respond? God may not call us to be a Luther, a Washington, or a Lincoln; but He may call us to perform as great a work, and to serve as great a purpose, even though it be only on a small scale. All of us are called to do something; to fill some place in God's great plan of redemption. What will we respond? Will we answer the call in saying with Moses, "Here am I"; with Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth"; with Cornelius, "What is it, Lord?"; with Paul, "What wilt Thou have me to do?"; or with Peter, will we cause Christ thrice to say unto us, "Lovest thou Me? If so, then feed my sheep, then follow Me"?

When Christ called His disciples, we are told that it is said of them, "And straightway they forsook their nets and followed Him." It took little hesitancy on the part of the disciples as to whether they were to obey the call or not. Why was this so? Because they knew the Master had need of them; because they knew Him who said unto them, "Follow Me." They knew they could follow no better leader, could choose no better course, could live no better life, could be engaged in no better business, than becoming fishers of men. Poor fishermen as they were all their

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life, they knew their disqualifications of becoming disciples of the great Master of heaven and earth. They knew how poorly fitted they were for this great task, but He who called them knew that far better than they themselves; yet the Master could make use of them, and was not ashamed to call them His disciples.

Jesus today is earnestly and tenderly calling you and me just as sure as he called those humble fishermen by the sea of Galilee to be His first disciples. Unfitted as they were, yet because the Master called them, they were obedient thereto. Why was this so? Because they well knew that the Christian on his knees sees more than the wise men with all their knowledge; because they knew there was more chance for a cripple on the right road, than for a racer on the wrong road. They forsook their nets because they were not ashamed of Him who called them; because they heard the still small voice of Jesus saying unto them, "Christian, love Me more than these"; because they knew there was no profit in gaining the whole world and losing their own soul, and therefore they did not listen to Satan when he said, "All this will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

Ah, who of us will answer the call for Christian

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patriots? How many with Simon and Andrew will cast away their old nets of sin; will give the world the last look; will turn their backs upon the wickedness of this world; will leave the border land of God's kingdom, and follow Jesus into the midst of the land that flows with milk and honey, there to dwell and prosper for time and eternity?

We must conclude our discourse, but that is not the be-all and the end-all. Lo, from the throne in heaven above, God is calling unto the sons of men; calling them to go and labor in His vineyard. What shall we respond? God is not calling in vain; He demands a decision from every one of us. Answer we must, either yes or no. If we work not in His vineyard, we by that very act have given the Master the answer, "No." Oh, can there be a heart so cold that will not answer the call of Him who gave His life for us on calvary?

God is calling and the sons of men must answer. We are the sons of men. God is calling you and me. What shall be our answer?

"Lord, thy servant here prepare, a strict account to give."

CHAPTER IV

LIFE'S HIDDEN TREASURE

“Buy the Truth and sell it not.”—PROV. 23: 23.

EVERY person is conscious of the fact that all life is a search for a goodly heritage. Every man is at home in this truth. Examine yourself and you will find that your innermost motive is to find the best possession. In business, in thinking, in literature, in preaching, in art, in music, everywhere this truth is common to all things: we are seeking for the treasure of the greatest worth. “Who shall show us any good?” is the cry of the anxious human heart.

This is so because men are always seeking some good investment. Some things cost little, but also are worth little. Other things cost much, but when once possessed they are an invaluable treasure. Still other things cost equally much, but are not worth half their cost.

In spite of all the unfairness of the modern business world, there is one product on the market, which has been selling for so long a time that it surpasses all other

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products taken together. Men have been buying this product for nearly two thousand years now, and all attest to the fact that it is as safe an investment as they ever made. They confess perhaps that it is the dearest product on the market; they also acknowledge that it has paid them to give the highest price for it.

When a man buys this product, he is not cheated by having to give more profit than the product itself is worth, but rather receives full and equal recompense. And this is exactly the investment people are looking for. People have been robbed so desperately by unfair business that they are eagerly looking for some buy where they will receive full value. If there are any such people here, let me know and I will tell you where you can get the best purchase of which you ever knew.

It is a product placed on the market by the oldest and most reliable business man of the whole world. This business man has the reputation of giving the best interest on any investment; of never having defrauded any one; of having the best capital ever heard of, for he is never known to have gone bankrupt, but always to have had more funds in surplus than he needed to pay his investors. Unlike any

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other business, he asks the highest price for his product, but in return therefor gives a lasting product. Unlike any other product, this is the only one that has the genuine guarantee attached to it. It is the only product on the market that has the stamp of eternity upon it. If you hold this product up to the light you cannot find any dross in it; for it has passed through the refiner's pot and has come out the pure unmixed gold. When you compare this product with other products you will find all other products to be full of dross, because no one has the recipe for the making of this marvelous product but He alone, who has been engaged in setting it forth from the foundation of the world. Men in all ages have tried to produce something of an imitation of this excellent product, but in vain; for he who wants this product must go to the one and only dealer and pay the price of its worth.

Now then, having gone through this preliminary order, I am ready as a salesman to introduce the head of the firm which deals in this business and present for sale the product, which I as a salesman am commissioned to sell.

My employer is the everlasting God, the head of the firm of salvation and eternity. The head needs

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no further introduction, for I am sure we all have had dealings with Him in some form or other. An employer with so universal a name needs no introduction, for the name itself bespeaks the character of the person. The Almighty One, the everlasting God, the Lord Jehovah is His name.

Thus I shall proceed to demonstrate the product my employer offers for sale. My text is the product, "Buy the Truth," and the open Bible is the catalogue wherein the price and nature of the product are recorded. Never has any man found the product of Truth falling short of the guarantee the catalogue promises concerning it. "Buy the Truth and sell it not: prove me herewith," saith my God, and see if it be not the best purchase you have ever made. "If you believe not me and my words," saith my God, then ask the thousands upon thousands of men and women who already have bought this product, and let their words be your conclusive proof that the product has been found to be exactly that which the open Bible claims it to be.

This is the very purpose which the kingdom of God came to satisfy. The secret of this kingdom consists in addressing itself immediately and profoundly to the

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supreme desire of the heart. As light is adapted to the eye; as sound is adapted to the ear; as substance appeals to the touch, so this kingdom of heaven appeals to our highest sense. It appeals to something that is in us; for it answers an interior voice; it meets a felt necessity. The kingdom of God is not like unto a dreamer or a poet; but like unto a merchant who lays his plans, awakens his energy and inspires his enthusiasm to gain a goodly heritage. Wondrous kingdom; it will join any man in his daily toil and say to him, "In so far as he is a wise and honest workman, I am just like you." It does not merely go to the artist and poet, but it also comes down to the day laborer and says, "This is what I do, I dig—I am just like you."

Now let us note the worth and price of this wondrous product of Truth, for the worth of something is one of the most important considerations in any transaction. Different from any other product, its worth cannot be measured in terms of dollars and cents; but must be represented by the value which Christ placed upon the soul of man when He said, "For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Nothing can become the substitute of this precious treasure, because there

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is nothing that can measure up to the high standard of the Truth of Him who said, "I am the Truth." As for its essence, it is without fault, for it is given as the pure and perfect gift of God. In its nature it is unchangeable, for its value never changes but remains the same from age to age; because the Truth that came by Jesus Christ cannot be broken. Its face value is salvation and its guarantee is eternity, and hence salvation and eternity form the essence of the product of Truth.

The price of the worth of Truth consists in the submission of our life to that of God. "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am lowly and meek of heart; for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Again, that price consists in the sacrifice of sinful desires and worldly affections. "Wherefore, if thy hand or foot offend thee, cut them off and cast them from thee; it is better to enter into eternal life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet and be cast into perdition." Still again, the price of Truth consists in possessing enough backbone to brave worldly contempt and persecution. "For unto you it is given in behalf of Christ not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake."

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Such is the kingdom, of God which comes to us, saying, "I am a merchantman who has found a hidden treasure; examine it, test it, receive it, but in so doing all other treasures must be given up." Therein lies the test of the price of the product of Truth. The piercing words of Christ unto Simon Peter form the basis of the test, when He said, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?"

What is Christianity without love for Christ but a catacomb in which to bury religion. It is a cage without a bird; the gaunt skeleton of a man out of which life has fled. A deeper burning love for the Son of God is needed in the church of today. The Christ, forceful as man, yet gentle as woman; radiant, graceful and expressive, can and must be the only attraction of the church of God. He who spoke the greatest words ever known with such manly simplicity, healing power, forceful and sympathetic charm; He it is who demands our unswerved love. His person is sweeter than his garments, dearer than His scepter, more glorious than His throne. Love to Him is the very heart's core of true religion. We may be ever so zealous in doing great things, yet when we have done all, we shall be as sounding brass and a tinkling

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cymbal if we have not love for the Christ. It is not possible for a man to be a Christian who has not love for the Christ. Take the heart away and life is impossible; take love for Christ away and religion in the highest sense of the word is impossible. All blessings come to us from His pierced hands and hence if we have received them we must love Him. You cannot walk in the sun without being warmed, nor receive of Christ's fullness without being moved to love Him in return.

After the price of love had been paid, the next natural price will be that of willing service. When Christ called His disciples we are told that it is said of them, "And straightway they forsook their nets and followed Him." It took little hesitancy on the part of the disciples as to whether they were to follow Him in willing service or not. Why? Because they knew they could follow no better leader; could choose no better course; could live no better life; could be engaged in no better business than becoming fishers of men. They forsook all else because they knew there was more chance for a cripple on the right road than for a racer on the wrong road. They followed Christ because they knew there was no profit in gaining the whole

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world and losing their soul, and hence they did not listen to Satan when he said unto them, "All this will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

What are all these quotations and references but so many expansions of the great doctrine of the text that the kingdom of God is like unto a merchantman, who having found a hidden treasure, more valuable and precious than all others, surrenders his life-gathered store in order that he may possess himself of this most valuable of all treasures.

How this very truth corresponds in our own life! Here is a book collector who points out some one book for which he may have given up fifty other books. We have all known men who have coveted some particular picture and as a result they have taken down all the other pictures on their walls and have said, "They all shall go if I can get that piece of painting." And so it is with the kingdom of heaven. "Yea," doubtless saith Paul, "for I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord."

Having this memorable resolve in mind, where then is our competing treasure that would equal itself to this, the treasure of all treasures? Where is there

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a nobler love or a grander purpose than the finding of the Christ, the most precious of all treasures?

Ever since the star glittered on the plains of Bethlehem, no man has arisen to claim the heathen for an inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. Christianity alone makes this supreme claim to every one who wishes to purchase the best of all treasures. It asks us to lay our little possessions beside it, that it may prove and show by self-revelation how little they are when compared with the magnitude, the quality and the luster of the Truth of the kingdom of God.

“Buy the Truth and sell it not.” This is the hidden treasure that asks to be looked at in the light of all that has gone before it. An offer which comes before me with a claim so broad, so substantial, so manifestly profound in its common sense, cannot do otherwise but arrest my thoughts and demand my confidence.

Love, cherish, venerate the Truth. Reprove it not; despise it not, for the Truth of God, as nothing else, maketh thee wise unto salvation. If we humbly face its frowns now, it will smile upon us in death and reward us in eternity.

To those who are seeking a good investment; the

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best purchase; the hidden treasure; to all such my God saith, "Buy the Truth."

To those who already are in possession of the Truth of salvation and eternity; to all such my God saith, "Sell it not."

CHAPTER V

LIFE'S ESTIMATION

"What think ye of Christ?"—MATT. 22: 42

IF YOU want to know the true caliber of a man, you only need to know what that man best likes to think about, because that which we most think of, is that which we best like to be and to do. When a business firm wants to employ a certain person, it will investigate the character of that person so as to know what interests that person most; what he most desires in life; and to what he pays most of his attention. If the firm has these three outstanding features in a person's life investigated, it can pretty accurately determine what kind of a person the applicant is. When once you know what interests a person most in life; what the person most desires in life; and to what he pays most of his attention, then you have solved the thinking of that man.

And what else is thinking but an outcome of the springs of the heart. If the heart is pure, then the thoughts will also be pure, for none of us can have

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pure thoughts if the heart is filthy. And what else is the heart but the soul, the real life of the inner man himself. So, then, if all that we think comes from the heart, and all that we do comes from the thoughts, then all that we think about is like seed sown into the ground, and as is the seed, so must be the fruit. Wherefore, if you know what kind of seed a man sows, you know what kind of fruit to expect. Do men gather peaches from apple trees, or apples from peach trees? No. Just as are the seeds of thought we now are sowing, so must be the fruit. You need not ask a man what kind of seed he is sowing, or what he is thinking about. You only need to look at his fruit and you will know. If a man does not pay his honest bills; if he is not interested in wholesome things of life; if he desires to be and to do other things than that which is pure and just; if he centers his attention upon all that is foolish in life, if you know all this about the man, you need not ask that person what he is thinking about, because our life tells our story.

So when Christ asked the learned doctors of the law what they thought concerning Himself, Christ knew that the answer they would give Him would settle the question as to whether they were Christians or not.

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Christ is the head-cornerstone in the whole temple of creation, and hence it is our attitude to Him that must determine the making and the outcome of our life. Wherefore, if all that we think determines the making of our life, and if Christ is the decisive point of all our thinking, then the question, "What think ye of Christ?" must be the be-all and the end-all of the whole life of man, both here and hereafter.

Imagine yourself seated in a court room. Before you is seated the judge, and you are a member of the jury. And imagine the case before the court as being the question under discussion, "What think ye of Christ?" Imagine witnesses before you, pro and con. With this mental picture before us, let us first call to our attention the friends of Christ and hear their testimony concerning the person in question. "Joshua, suppose you take the witness stand." "What do you think of Christ?" Hearken to his answer, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." "Isaiah, what do you think of Christ?" "Christ is the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Everlasting God, the Prince of Peace." "Job, what have you to say concerning this man Jesus?" "I know that my Redeemer liveth." "David, from whose seed sprang

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the Immortal Saviour, what is your testimony?" "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." "Solomon, what is your opinion of Christ?" "He is like the lily of the valley; like the rose of Sharon; like the bright and morning star." Passing on to the New Testament friends of our Lord, let us observe the evidence with which they can furnish us. "John the Baptist, you who baptized the great person of whom we are speaking, what have you to say concerning Him?" "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world." There is the Apostle Peter, who walked with Him and talked with Him, "What is your conviction of the Christ?" "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Hearken unto Paul, the great teacher and writer of the glorious gospel of Christ, "What word have you for our Lord and Saviour?" "For me to live is Christ."

Thus far we have only listened to but a few of the thousands of the friends of our Lord. In order, therefore, to accord just procedure to the case before us, we must needs call upon some of the enemies of Christ regarding their thoughts of Him. Hearken unto one of the multitude: "Never spake any man like this man." There stands Pilate, before whom our Lord

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was brought for trial, what are his words? "I find no fault in Him." Is not this a most remarkable testimony as coming from the lips of an enemy of Christ? Listen to the words of the wife of Pilate, as he was engaged in passing judgment upon our Lord. She said, "Pilate, have nothing to do with that man, for I have suffered terrible things in a dream because of Him." Mark the words of him, who betrayed our Lord, after he had committed the awful deed: "Truly I have betrayed innocent blood." Lastly, consider the words of the centurion as he stood by the side of the cross, when our Saviour breathed His last. "Truly this was the Son of God."

Now, then, the case is before you as a jury. What are you going to do with Jesus? It was the custom among the Jews to examine the paschal lamb before it was slain. It was inspected every day before it was appointed to be slain. So also the Lamb of God's Passover, our Lord, was questioned by friends and foes before being offered up for us on Calvary. He passed under the scrutiny of Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees and lawyers who tested Him in all their parts, yet they like Pilate could find no fault in Him. As then, so now, the question of all questions is, "What

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think ye of Christ?" All other questions dare not concern us until this is settled. When the vessel is going down, the one thing needful for every man is, "How can I get to land?" Until that is settled, we are lost and only upon reaching land, dare we think of this and that and the other thing.

Suppose you were to die tonight, and you never know just when that time may come, because life, of all things, is most uncertain, it would then be of little concern to you as to this or that or the other thing. Your chief concern and all your thoughts would be, "I know I must die; I cannot stay here any longer, and so I must go somewhere else, but where am I going?" Therefore, let nothing interfere with the business of your soul. Put all other questions aside until that is settled, and then come back to the less important things of life. A man is drowning, and you hold out your hand to save him, but he will not grasp hold of your hand until you can assure him that you can speak proper English. Is he not an idiot? All else is immaterial when one's life is at stake. Let us get on dry land first and then we may think of this, that and the other thing. We cannot afford to split hairs when souls all around us are perishing. Get right

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with God first, and the rest will take care of itself. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added unto you."

Second, observe the question concerns the person of the Saviour—a point we too often forget. We speak of the Lord's teachings and doings, but we ought more often remember that He was a real person. Not a name, not a myth, not a fiction, not a shadow that has passed across the historic page, but a real person of whom we must know by coming into personal contact with Him. Do you feel that He is enthroned in your heart's best love? Bleeding on the cross, yet exalted on the throne, can you equal these two things? Put all other questions aside, and see whether you have thought right concerning Christ or not.

Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, says, "Other foundation no man can lay, than that which is laid, which is Christ the Lord." This cornerstone, this foundation, was cast aside by the head of the master builders. It is said that at the building of the temple under Nehemiah, there was a stone which the builders did not know where to place. So they cast it aside with the remainder of the refuse into the valley of Hinnon. Later a king upon passing by saw the open-

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ing in the wall of the temple and ordered the missing stone to be found. It was found in the valley of Hinnon, covered over with all manner of refuse. The stone was placed in its proper place in the wall, and then, lo, to the surprise of all, it was found to be the chief cornerstone. It is from this incident that we derive the great truth—the builders of the Jewish religion found no place for Jesus Christ in the building of their religion.

They cast Him aside as refuse. They built their religion upon outer ceremonies and moralities and works of self-righteousness. Other people welcomed Him and have found a place for Him in the building of their lives. The Jewish builders found no fault in Him. They could not accuse Him of any sin; the power, wisdom and purity of His character they could not deny Him, and yet, in spite of it all, they rejected Him. Today the selfsame thing takes place. Today people go to Palestine to find a cornerstone for their church, and O, how often they forget to go to God's word and there find the foundation of their religion, their faith and their salvation.

How then are we to know what we are building and what we are thinking of Christ? By this, every man's

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work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it and the fire shall try every man's work to see of what sort it is. Oh, the fiery test. An awful moment it is when fire leaps upon a man's work to see of what sort it is. Fire is peculiar in that it does not distinguish between one person and another. It does not say, "This house was built by royal hands and that house by peasant hands, and therefore I must be gracious to the one and severe to the other." Ah, no, fire is no respecter of persons. But there is one thing which fire cannot do. It cannot burn gold. It can melt it, but not destroy it. That gold is found in the word of God. No man has any reason to fear the test of fire, if he uses as his foundation the precious gold offered him in the salvation of Jesus Christ on Calvary.

And this leads us to a third point, namely, what kind of thoughts have we of Christ? If there is no thought in our religion, there is no life in it. When we cease to think rightly of Christ, we begin to destroy our soul. The mind, the will and the heart must exercise themselves toward God, for if they do not, our worship is dead worship. Jesus suggests that we must think of Him and Him only. Is it a pleasure for

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you to think of Christ? Do you so love Him, that you delight to think of Him? As you naturally think of food and clothing, do you find it just as natural for you to think of Christ? These are the inquiries that try the steel of a man. Can you say, "In the heavenly Land, thrice happy am I and my heart it doeth leap at the sound of his name"? Do thoughts of Jesus keep you back from sin and incite you to be and to do good? Is Christ worthy of your actual, practical, diligent service, or is it all talk, idle chat, broken resolutions and vain professions?

Our everyday life indicates that which we think of Christ. Our everyday life is like a thermometer, which records our warmth of love for Christ. God looks upon it, man sees it and you know it. The way in which we act, talk and live shows what we think of Christ. Look at people wherever you go, and you can soon see what they think of Christ. Low thoughts of Christ weaken the best character, but love for the Saviour leads to good and noble deeds.

See Christ lovely beyond all things and He will make a man and woman of you to the fullness of man and womanhood. Let Jesus not be a shadow to you, or your religion is not substantial. Let Him not be a

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myth to you, or your religion is mere fancy. Let Him not be a fiction to you, or your religion is not true. Let Him not be merely a name to you, or your religion will be all name and nothing else. Let Him not only be a teacher to you, or you lack a Saviour. Let Him not be far off, but near and dear to you all the way. As He is God's beloved, so may He be your beloved. As He is Lord of all Lords, so may He be your Lord. And when any one asks you, "What think ye of Christ?" may you be able to say, "He is all my salvation, and all my desire; through life and unto death, my Saviour."

"Christ is not valued at all unless he is valued above all."

CHAPTER VI

LIFE'S VALUE

“What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”—MARK 8: 37.

ONE of the many questions that has engaged the thought of man comes to our attention in this fashion—which is the more valuable, the world or the soul? Various answers have been given, but when the Christian is asked to give an answer, he replies, “I have but one answer; to me the soul means more than the world, and hence I cannot surrender my soul for the world.”

Now in order that we may know the real worth of anything, we must have a true appreciation of its value. We can have an appreciative valuation of anything only by knowing something about that thing. A person living in a house has a better idea of what that house is worth than one who knows nothing about that house. Today I know far better what a typewriter is worth than I knew before I had one. And so the principle holds good in all cases.

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In order to set a just value on anything we must of necessity know something about that thing.

Our text means to say—what can you find that is equal to the soul? When we exchange anything for something else we expect to receive in return something that is equal in value to that which we exchange. When a man exchanges a house for an automobile, we will say, he expects that automobile to be worth as much as the house. When we pay a dollar for something we expect to receive something that is worth a dollar, although that is not always the case. So then when we say, “What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” we mean, “What can a man find that is worth as much as the soul?”

Let us see then what we mean by the term “soul.” The soul is the higher life: the life not of the body, nor of the mind, but of the feelings, the affections and aspirations. So then the soul is nothing more than your real self. If then a man exchanges his soul for anything else, he, in reality, is exchanging himself for something that never is equal to his worth. Surely no one wants to sell himself for a trifle of money or pleasure or what not else. And yet how many are doing this very thing—selling themselves? This is the

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very business in which Satan is engaged—the buying and selling of souls. Every day Satan has his auction of souls and, oh, how many sell themselves for a little mess of pottage? Every day Satan entices men, saying, “I will give you so much of pleasure or money if you will sell your soul to me.” How many there are who sell their birthright for a little pleasure, thinking they have gained thereby and, lo, when that little pleasure is ended, they see what a poor bargain it has been as they lie despoiled and forsaken along the cruel road that leads to hell.

Can a man be so foolish as to sell that soul which must live on forever? Our souls can never die. No matter whether they be saved or lost, yet they can never die. We may do with ourselves what we wish, yet we shall not be able to destroy the soul. There is a Forever stamped upon it that cannot be erased. Think, then, how foolish it is to sell that part of ourselves which must go on forever. Surely, if we shall sell our souls for something that is not its equal, our soul shall be lost. It is not lost in the sense that it is no more; but worse than that, because it can never die, it must go on forever in eternal misery and slowly to that to which it has been sold. Surely we shall be

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the losers and shall have no one to blame but ourselves, for every man is master of his fate and captain of his soul. Even as clay in the hand of the potter may be spoiled or made to use, even so the soul lies in our hands, either to be lost or to be kept for life eternal. "Life is real, life is earnest and the grave is not its goal; dust thou art, to dust returnest, was not spoken of the soul."

What then shall we do with this most precious soul of ours? What price then shall we set as the worth of the soul? A skillful jeweler, who has taken a great deal of pains to make up some exquisite piece of jewelry, cannot be blamed for getting provoked when he sees his workmanship fallen into the hands of children or fools, who have no understanding and cannot estimate what work has been put upon it, and hence will not take care of it, but soon will have it ruined. Such a rare piece is the soul of man, the work of Almighty God after His own image, so precious that the soul is at a loss to find anything to equal it. Like as the jeweler is wroth when he sees his workmanship trampled under the feet of children who cannot value his work, even so the Spirit of God is grieved when that which He hath made to be a temple for himself

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to dwell in, shall because of sin be exchanged to become a den of thieves, a cage of unclean birds, and a harbor of impure thoughts. How grieved God must be when He sees the soul, the workmanship of His own hands, exchanged for that which is not worth it.

Witness Christ's estimate of the value of the soul, "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Our Saviour, in these words, takes as it were a pair of balances in his hands and places the world in one scale and the soul in the other. On the one side is this little sparkle of life, which must soon pass away. On the other side is the bright burning glow of life eternal. Upon weighing these two elements, Christ showed that the soul outweighed the world and hence was worth the more. Why then should the gain of the world imperil the salvation of the soul? Does not experience speak for us here? Have we not all lived long enough to discover this much, that when our heart is set eagerly upon any of the things of the world, we are tempted to go to the very level of that which we desire, and as a result we will not be giving the soul the care it demands?

Ah, but hearken, there is still a greater reason why

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there is nothing that can be given in exchange for the soul, and that is because Jesus has bought our souls with the price of his own life. The real value of any object is that which one will give for it who knows its worth. Jesus gave His own precious blood as the price for the redemption of the soul of man. A price so dear—think then, oh, my soul, the worth of thy being? Is there anything to be given in exchange for that which was bought with so dear a price as the blood of the Lamb of God? What shall be given for a thing so precious as the soul when the whole universe is a price far too small?

These souls must be very precious in the sight of God since He redeemed them at a price so immense as the life of the dearest and best heaven could hold. These souls must be infinitely valuable above all that we can imagine if God thought fit to require the blood of the Darling of heaven for their redemption. The misery into which these souls of ours were destined to be plunged must have been extremely terrible, since God thought proper to allow His Son to leave high heaven in order to save them. For what in the whole universe is of equal value with the blood of the Son of God, the price of the soul of man?

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Now, then, if God has estimated our souls at such a high rate as the life of His own Son, shall we then set such a low price on them as to give them in exchange for anything imaginable? If God has given so much for them, can we give too much for them or give anything in exchange for them? If, for their redemption, God has sacrificed the most valuable person in heaven, is there anything too valuable upon earth to be given up for them? No, never; for after all that we have heard, we ought to be convinced that there is no shadow of a doubt in the words of the Saviour when He said, "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" A soul so valuable ought to be preferred before all things, because nothing is too precious to be given in exchange for it. If we were offered whatever we wish in this whole universe, is that the price at which we would sell our soul? If by the granting of that wish we should procure from the world all the rewards that we can expect, would we give our souls in exchange? If we would, we should sell our soul at a very low price. See the old man bowing under age with almost one foot in the grave, at what price would he exchange his soul? At the price of a few more days and a few more pleasures?

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At what price does the financier exchange his soul? Will he surrender his soul for a pile of money? Will the society belle sell her soul for sparkling jewels, mansions and all the excitement of a gay life? Does that man sell his soul to become a prince or king? Oh, for what contemptible things men will sell their souls. The soul in exchange for which the whole world would not be a sufficient consideration. The loss of the soul presents the picture of a man in despair who, immersed in all the misery that can torture the soul, wishes, but too late, to give everything to recover it. Nothing is to be given in exchange for the soul of man, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth, but rather in first seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness with the assurance of having all other things added unto us.

CHAPTER VII

LIFE'S SECRET

"Behold he prayeth."—ACTS 9: 11.

THE history of prayer is the history of religion. Every race and nationality from the beginning of time has had a religion in some form or other, no matter how different they may have been otherwise. Men always have worshipped some God and always will, because the tendency to pray is native in us. The reason why we need to pray is simply because we cannot help praying. In the deepest parts of man's being lies a sense of the feeling of the need of a superior power to make his uncertain life more secure.

The traveler climbs the hills of the Himalayas and hears the prayers of North India. He goes back to the ruins of ancient Rome and reads the prayer of the Romans upon hard stone. The historian finds the Greek world and literature full of prayer. Xenophon begins every day's march with prayer. Pericles begins every address with prayer. When one turns from the superstitious habits to the most elevated of spirits,

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he hears the great Plato, "Every man of sense before beginning an important work will ask help of the gods."

Thus, we see the naturalness of prayer in all men of all ages. We have differences of opinion, but in prayer men of opposite ideas agree as one. Luther, the protestant, disagrees in many points with St. Bernard, the Catholic, and yet, says Luther, "In the faith wherein St. Bernard prays do I also pray." The great theologian Hartmann states it, thus: "Give a man a passion for prayer and you give him a lever to move the world."

Jesus descended from heaven in a vision to Ananias, saying, "Arise, go to the street that is called Straight and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, for behold he prayeth." The fact of Saul's praying was noticed in heaven; was astonishing to Ananias; and was a novelty to Saul himself. Notice the attention God paid to Saul. He knew the street where he lived when he said, "Go to the street that is called Straight." He knew the house wherein he lived when he said, "Inquire in the house of Judas." He knew where he came from when he said, "Ask for Saul of Tarsus." Last, but not least, God knew he prayed when he said to Ananias, "Behold he prayeth."

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It is a glorious fact to know that prayers are noticed in heaven. The poor man, climbing up to his chamber, bends his knees in praying in a language of sighs and tears; lo, that groan has tuned the hearts of heaven into music. That tear has been caught by God. Tears are the diamonds of heaven, and sighs are the music of Jehovah's throne.

Notice the joy in heaven when a man prays. When one of God's children are born again, the angels stand around his cradle. They set heaven's bells ringing when they see one of us praying. Heaven is in jubilee, and Satan in anger when the angels can point down upon you and me, saying, unto our Father God, "Behold he prayeth." Think how glad must be the hearts of our loved ones in Glory when the angels can tell them, "Behold he prayeth."

This was Paul's real prayer, so that it was a novelty to Paul himself. Before this occasion Paul went up to the temple twice a day at the hour of prayer. If you had accompanied him you would have found him pouring out a sublime prayer, but it went for nothing before God. He often said prayers, but he never prayed. Do you see that man trying to gain a hearing from his master? He speaks in blank verse, but God

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pays no attention. Why? Because he merely says a prayer, but he himself is not praying at all. Then he tries a different style and procures a book, and again bending on his knee, utters the most delightful prayer he can find. But the most High disregards his cold, empty formalities. At last he throws away the book, forgets his blank verse, and simply says, "Lord, teach me to pray." Now God hears him because it is not words but it is the heart that is speaking.

"Behold he prayeth." This is an argument in the mind of Ananias. Poor Ananias was afraid to go to the house of Saul because he thought it was like stepping into a lions' den. "If I go to his house," thought Ananias, "Saul will take me to Jerusalem and persecute me as he has done to all my predecessors, for I am one of Christ's disciples. I dare not go; but God says, 'Behold he prayeth'." "Well," says Ananias, "That is enough for me. If he is a praying man he will not hurt me."

There is an anecdote of two men traveling in Switzerland. Presently they came into the midst of a dense forest, and you know people tell gloomy tales concerning the inns in that vicinity. One is running the risk of his life, if he, a stranger, should lodge there.

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One of these travelers, an infidel, said to the other, a Christian, "I do not like stopping here at all." "Well," said the other, "let's try it." So they went, but it looked so suspicious, that neither felt safe. Presently the landlord of the house met the gentlemen with these words, "I always read and pray with my family before going to bed. Will you join us?" "Yes, with the greatest of pleasure," came the spontaneous reply from both men. When they went upstairs the infidel exclaimed, "I'm not afraid at all now." "Why?" asked the other. "Because our host is a man of prayer." "Oh," said the other, "then you think something of religion after all; because a man prays, you can go to sleep in his house." And it was marvelous how both of them slept, being accompanied by sweet dreams; for they felt that where the house had been roofed by prayer and walled by devotion, there could be found no man to do them harm.

This was the argument to Ananias, for when God said, "Behold he prayeth," he felt safe in going to the house of Saul. If God had said otherwise, Ananias might have argued, saying, "I will not go to that persecutor's house." If God had said, "Behold he preacheth," Ananias might have argued, saying, "That

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he may do and yet be a deceiver." If God had said, "He is going to church," Ananias might have again argued, saying, "He may enter as a wolf in sheep's clothing"; but when God said, "Behold he prayeth," then there could be no more argument, for it was sufficient proof of the assurance of safety.

Oh, Christians, would you be happy? Then be much in prayer. Would you be victorious? Then be often in prayer. The happiest man is he who has caught the vision of prayer and lives with God as friend with friend.

God cannot do for a close heart what He can do for an open one. Some things God cannot do until he finds a man that prays. If God wants bridges or tunnels constructed; lightnings harnessed and cathedrals built, will He do the work himself? No. Only when men gird up the loins of their minds, and open their hearts, is it that God reveals His truth and purposes to man. We pray for the same reason that we work and think, because only so can we find out what God wants to have done. The best part of prayer is not our talking to God, but our listening to God.

The reason we do not have more true, genuine religion today is because we do not have more prayer.

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Oh, let us go to our church and home, saying, "We must have more prayer." Have a prayer meeting, even if you have it all to yourself; and if asked how many persons were present, say four, God, the Son, the Holy Ghost and myself.

One day in Paris a religious procession, carrying a crucifix, passed Voltaire and a friend of his, both of whom were regarded as infidels. Voltaire lifted his hat. "What," exclaimed his friend, "are you reconciled with God?" Whereupon Voltaire replied with fine irony, "We salute, but we do not speak." That is true of many a man's relationship with his God. I trust this may not be true with you and me, but hope that it may be said of us, "Behold he prayeth."

CHAPTER VIII

LIFE'S TEST

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."—I THESS. 5: 21.

TODAY we are living in a time of great testing. A time when the steel of humanity is being placed under critical examination. A time when men of faith are again put into the fiery furnace. A time when faith in God is strained to the utmost degree so that we need again to learn the warning of St. Paul, the Apostle, when he said, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

Any one, going out into the world of today, well realizes how unsteady men are with regard to those things which are lasting, true and eternal. How many are the questions and doubts that perplex men today. How easily men are tossed to and fro, not knowing whither they are drifting. How all humanity is groaning for a solid foundation upon which it may rest its weary wandering feet

This condition arises out of the deception in which men have been placed with regard to that which is

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true and that which is false. Many are the notions men possess regarding truth and falsehood. What is true to one man, is apparently false to another man. That which is right for one man is seemingly wrong for another man. That which was right yesterday is regarded as wrong today. One day we accept a certain belief and the next day we reject that same belief. In short, the morality of man is constantly changing, so that we find ourselves in an unsettled state of affairs. This is the result of a morality established by man, but absent of God. We cannot have any fixed standard of right and wrong if we leave God out of our calculation. Man in his views of right and wrong is ever changing, while God's standard of life is forever the same. Therefore, we must bring our laws into conformity with the divine ordinances of God, in order to again insure our proper bearing in life. This bearing can only be reached by finding the proper standard of measurement by which we may prove what are the things that are good, and pure, and true.

This standard of measurement has too long been the genius of man, which genius has been found wanting in its final reach and end. Men have too long been

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the leaders of the blind leading the blind. Men too long have deceived each other by mere craftiness, shrewdness and false wisdom. This, indeed, is a false standard of measurement because its fruits have proven its deception, for Christ told us, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Man can never be the measurement of man himself. He who measures his life by the life of some other man, will indeed be a small man in the sight of Almighty God. Only as we measure our life by the pure and undefiled life and pattern of Jesus Christ, will we see what we ought to be and do. His life of thirty-three years' duration has been placed before us as the model for all time. This is the standard in the face of which all things must be tested. Anything that cannot stand in the face of Jesus Christ and His righteousness, is proven to be wanting.

In order, therefore, to determine what are the things that are good, and hence worthy of holding fast, we must bring forth the divine scales of God and then proceed by placing Christ, our standard, on one side of the scale, and the thing to be proven on the other side of the scale, and therefrom reach the solution of our problem. In all our testing always let us see

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the model of Christ in the background, and we shall have the genuine guarantee of reaching the proper conclusion. Whatever be the problem before us that needs to be solved, we can always answer it by asking the question, "What would Jesus do?" This is the standard which we must adopt by which to judge all our thoughts, all our actions and the final outcome of the course we choose.

The religion of Jesus Christ, when put to this test, will be found to be good and hence worthy of holding fast. Those who have recently become Christians, and those who have been long years in the service of Christ, need to have their thoughts stirred, and their souls quickened by a very practical consideration of the religion of Jesus Christ.

The religion of Christ is not a transient passing fancy, but is an ever-living force working upon the hearts of men, convicting them of sin, of righteousness and of judgment to come. Its resources are adequate to all human needs, and adapted to all human nature. We have not seen the day, nor will we ever see the day, in which we shall outgrow the religion of Jesus Christ. It has developed the strongest and purest character the world has ever seen; it has changed more lives

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than anything ever known; it remains as the inspiration and power of an endless life.

There is stored in the religion of Christ all that any man may ever need for the development of his social, intellectual and spiritual life. There is a vigorous impulse in man to test the resources of old mother earth, and nature bears the test gloriously. Put the religion of Christ to the same test; try it with as keen an interest and we shall soon see that it is not leaning upon the staff of old age.

The religion of Christ is not limited to the rapture of sins forgiven; its life is not confined to meditations upon divine love. The religion of Christ is a living religion, which always apprehends the emergencies and needs of every generation. It always bears in willing hands the blessings of salvation to a perishing world. It presents a gospel that meets all the requirements of man, and applies this gospel in stimulating great movements of thought and action.

In Paul's letter according to I Timothy 4:8, we read: "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of this life and of that which is to come." Herein Paul sets forth a decisive conclusion which serves as a splendid answer to the question in hand.

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There are many things a man may have without having godliness. A wicked man may have health, may have earthly possession in largest measure, may have learning, may have fame; but what do all these things amount to without godliness? Our health may fail at any moment, then what have we in our sickness without God? Our wealth may vanish at any moment, then what have we in our poverty without God? Our fame may lessen at any moment, then what have we in our obscurity without God? Our learning may turn to no account when seeking to understand mysteries, then what have we to supply our lack of knowledge without God? Or, if we retain all these earthly gifts, yet there are cravings within us which all these gifts taken together are not able to satisfy. With robust health, pocket full of money, mind well stored, fame secured, yet with all this we shall find that sorrows still surround us, injustice still confronts us, dissatisfaction and unrest still meet us, and last of all we find with all these resources, we shall have nothing of word or thought to meet the emergency. There we shall stand like unto a helpless child, at the end of our extremity, feeling the need of something more satisfying and more enduring. It is not until man comes to

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the utter extremity of his abilities and resources, that he realizes, to the fullest extent, his need of the all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ and His salvation.

All these earthly gifts will do for some things, but there is one thing that will do for all things and that is the unexcelled religion of Jesus. So when we come to you and ask you to believe the faith and live the life of a Christian, we come offering something that has been proven to be of greater value than any other thing under the sun. Nothing in this whole wide world has been put to as many and severe tests as the Christian religion. And nothing has so valiantly withstood the test, and come out with such a great and glorious triumph as the Christian religion. All the wisdom this world has ever produced has repeatedly been hurled against the Christian religion, only to find in amazing surprise that it cannot be wiped from off the face of the earth. All the criticism of the ages has been used to discover as many faults as possible in the Christian religion, only to prove to the world that it contained no dross but came out the pure unmixed gold. Hence we are convinced all the more that the religion of Christ is not a myth, not a supposition, not a make-belief, but rather we are fully persuaded that

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the foundation of God standeth sure, knowing that no other foundation no man can lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ the Lord.

Proof of the inevitable good resulting from the Christian religion is found in the fact that it purifies the body; that it illumines the mind; and that it quickens the soul. It penetrates into every department of life, whether business or amusement; social intercourse, or private meditation. Ask the physician, ask employers of labor, ask teachers in school, ask any one whom you please what their experience teaches them respecting the average virtuous and wicked person. They will tell you that the godly person has the healthiest body, is the most faithful servant, the most painstaking student, the best citizen, and the happiest man. A man who is formed and then reformed and then informed by the religion of Jesus Christ, will do far more effectual work than the same man who is without the Christian religion. The Christian works with less friction and anxiety because his care is cast upon his heavenly Father. He works with more confidence because his trust is placed on one higher than himself and hence more dependent than himself.

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In the long run the man who is a Christian is the man who is trusted and respected. Who does not admire, love and esteem a man who has been a Christian for fifty, sixty or seventy years? Who honors a man for having lived an ungodly life for fifty, sixty or seventy years? Look over the life of a man who has been a Christian for fifty years, and then look over the life of one who has been an ungodly man for the same length of time, and you will soon be convinced whether it pays to be a Christian or not.

A practical appeal of a practical life is found to be in the long run far more telling than all one may explain or argue in favor of the Christian life. It may be impossible to get a man to listen to or take interest in the principles upon which the Christian religion is founded. But it is always possible to show that man what a life of godliness really is by living that life yourself. We as Christians can always show others that the Christian life is full of joy, rich in blessings, and proves to be an asset in every walk of life. Men may refuse to listen to or be moved by words, but they cannot help noticing and being influenced by the life of a godly man.

CHAPTER IX

LIFE'S JUBILEE

"Ye shall proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof."—LEVITICUS 25: 10.

THESE words form the basis upon which this glorious land of America was founded—the basis of liberty. The law of liberty is not a new one, but is as old as God Himself, who is its author and promoter.

Early in the life of Israel, God ordained a year of Jubilee, which meant a proclamation of freedom to all men everywhere. This period of Jubilee happened every fifty years, determined by the lapse of seven seven-year periods, because seven was a complete number to the ancient Jews. So when the time of completeness had arrived, there was to be a time of great joy and rest, and hence it received the name of Jubilee, which meant the beginning of a time of great joy and gladness.

Jubilee began on the day of atonement, after the priest had atoned for the sins of the people, which was announced by trumpet blasts. It was marked by

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a complete suspension of all labor. All fear for lack of food was quieted by God's command, "I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year." Man needed occasional rest as seen by the importance God gave it when He hallowed the Sabbath Day. Man was not to give himself over to ceaseless toil or unrestraining endeavors to gain riches. Christianity repeats the selfsame lesson. Mary pausing from her work to listen to Jesus, is a better model than Martha ceaselessly toiling. "Come ye apart and rest awhile," spake Christ unto His disciples.

A second feature of the year of Jubilee was the fact that the spontaneous fruits that grew during that year were open to all. No man had the right to appropriate them to this or that person. It taught the lesson of a common dependence of all people upon God's bounties, and His equal regard for all alike. What grew in the fields that year was God's harvest, free to all. Christianity endorses this principle. Christian charity urges that we contribute to the happiness of all men.

The third feature of the year of Jubilee was the fact that it restored to men their lost liberties. Every Hebrew, whom poverty or misfortune had deprived

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of freedom, now regained all his rights as a free man. It brought back to the original owners the estates which had been taken from them, because of poverty or slavery. Jubilee recalled to remembrance the fact that the land belonged to God and that man was only the keeper thereof. Nothing that we have in our private possession is strictly our own; it is only entrusted to us as stewards of God, to whom all belongs. And in the day of Judgment all of us must give account of our stewardship, whether or not we have wisely invested that which God has entrusted to us, to be used not for ourselves, but for the good of all men. Thus Jubilee, from this standpoint, was instituted by God to prevent the accumulation of land in the hands of a few. It demanded the general and equal division of land among all men. Against this very thing we must guard here in America. To-day, in America, 480 families own 41 per cent. of all the property in this land, so that if all these families chose to combine with their great money power, they could erect an aristocracy that would rule this land. Great Britain is today suffering because of a similar fact. Ireland is rocking as with an earthquake because the land is held in the grasp of a few rich landowners,

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while the mass of people are stripped of their ancestral possession and are sunken in poverty. Because of a similar evil the French Revolution overturned the French Government. Christianity does not support the idea of having everything in common, but it offers a remedy, which expresses itself, thus: Let property be held and administered on Christian principles by being rich in good works; ready to distribute and willing to help where help is needed.

Every one was further given a new start in life with the coming of the year of Jubilee. Through this new start in life, given to every one alike, all men were placed on an equal footing, as if they entered the promised land anew and experienced afresh the original covenant of grace.

All this brings before us man as the ransomed child of God. The year of Jubilee made the slave a free man and the poor man a property owner. How Christianity emphasizes this very truth! It forbids the oppression of any one for whom Christ died. Christ died for all men alike, and hence no man is to be oppressed, regardless of race, color or nationality. He may be poor, ignorant or even wicked, but shall he be oppressed on that account? Nay, because for him

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the plan of redemption was also intended. For him Christ also laid aside His regalia in heaven and came down to earth for his salvation. For him also Christ made satisfaction for sin, and for his regeneration Christ also sent forth His Holy Spirit. Out of respect for all this, man is to be treated with kindness, love and forbearance, and in the Judgment Christ will say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

Finally, Jubilee is a type of the gospel age which Christ came to proclaim. As the year of Jubilee, so the gospel of Christ brings rest of heart to all who hear and obey its joyful sound. The gospel like the Jubilee brings deliverance from the bondage of Satan, sin and self. Like the year of Jubilee so the gospel of Christ brings forgiveness of debts, which we all owe our heavenly Father. We all are poor debtors. Our debts exceed the best our lives can offer. Justice must have reckoning, for there is no trifling with God, but for us also there has come a period of Jubilee. Our Jubilee began with the coming of Christ to earth, and that Christ is here now to pay the debt we owe our God. Each soul apart from Christ is a poor slave, but in company with Christ is free from all fetters.

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Satan enchains the soul, but Jesus vanquishes this despot and sets us free from Satan's power. Sin rules our old nature and it must reign till Christ is allowed to enter the secret chamber of the soul, for a new passion gains the throne of our heart when Christ comes into our life. This world is a foul tyrant. Its smiles allure; its frowns deter; its fashions force compliance; it drives its millions to a slavish toil, but the grace of Jesus Christ frees from the world's enthralling snare. Death, too, is a foul tyrant and none can relieve but Christ himself.

As the year of Jubilee restored former inheritance, so the gospel of Christ restores our lost estate, which we once held in heaven. Sin drove man from the fair abode he once occupied, and forced him into a wilderness of desolation. God's smile was lost and the blessing of communion with him ceased. But Christ restores with more than the heritage of Eden. Christ came, lived, died, and now reigns to grant this Jubilee of freedom and rejoicing to all souls.

Hear the words of our great Liberator as He stood in the Jewish Synagogue and said, "The spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because he has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal

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the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." He, who spoke these words, is the one who becomes our life, our liberty, our ransom, our peace, our joy, our hope, and our final glory. It is the trustful soul that rests in a Jubilee of joy, freedom and salvation.

CHAPTER X

LIFE'S HOPE OR IMMORTALITY

"Because I live, ye shall live also."—JOHN 14: 19.

OF THE many and varied questions that have engaged the thought of man, perhaps there is none that has commanded more consideration than the immortality of the soul. Belief in man's continued existence after death is one of the most ancient and widespread of all human convictions. From the early dawn of history even to the present day, the idea of immortality is common to all nations. Although this idea does not receive universal acceptance, yet it must be admitted that it wields a universal sway over the thought and concern of all men.

Nothing presents greater mystery and inducement to the wisdom of all the ages like the immortality of the soul. It attracts the attention not only of a certain class of individuals, or of a distinct race of people, but it finds its abode in the mind and heart of every thinking man and woman. Hence we are brought to the place where we feel that such a universal

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conviction must spring from a sure and fixed source of reality. Something that has held the attention of man through all these ages, surely must have in it the elements of truth and certainty. If this were not so, men would have dismissed this question long before, but because it has continued to live in the minds of men all these years even unto the present hour, we cannot help but feel that it possesses the germ of reality and truth.

To convince our mind of the universal prevalence of the question before us let us call to your attention but a few of the many evidences of the ideas men have had concerning the life of the soul after death.

May we first consider the early developments of religion; when religious belief was yet in its infancy and crude in its nature. Here in this early period we find the mind of the savage already conceiving the idea that the soul is not extinguished at the death of the body, but enters into a frail shadowy existence which is confined to the place on earth where it dwelt while still living in the body. Although we recognize this idea as very imperfect and crude, yet we must respect it, because it contains a germ of belief in life beyond the grave. And though poorly expressed and

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conceived of, yet it represents an attempt to lay hold on that which man's inner nature always told him to be true. It was an humble beginning, but one which has continued to develop till today it appears as the unfolding of the full grown belief in the immortality of the soul, as expressed by Christ when He said, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

Passing down the ages we come to the religion of ancient Babylon. Here mythology informs us about a goddess who is said to have descended to the under world and after being there for a brief period of time, again appeared on earth. To the Babylonians this myth was their expression of life beyond the grave. Like as this goddess descended into death and later reappeared, so man likewise must pass through the same experience. Even as the sun sinks in the west and rises in the east, so man also at the end of this life sinks into death and with the sun rises again into the light of a new day.

From the Babylonians we pass to the religion of ancient China. Here we find a people who continue to worship their ancestors after they are dead and gone. The Chinese people believed in a world full of spirits into which a man's soul would enter after death.

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And so with this belief, each family had what was known as a hall of ancestors in which were preserved various objects used by these ancestors while here on earth. In this hall they held frequent banquets, at which they offered numerous sacrifices to the spirits of the departed ancestors, imploring them to return to the body they forsook and to the objects they once employed. Thus by means of this practice they maintained a very low but partial belief in the existence of the soul after death.

Still more clear is this idea of immortality as we come to the religion of Egypt, which is noted for its serious consideration of the life beyond. No other nation bestowed so much care upon the dead as that of Egypt.

One of its earliest practices in this direction was the embalming of the dead, or the attempt to keep the body from perishing. This was done because of the belief that the departed spirit had only gone on a long journey, after which it would again return to the body it had forsaken; and hence the body needed to be preserved for the habitation of the returning spirit.

Coming to the Israelites of the Old Testament, we find them sharing the general belief of the early world

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that the dead pass into an underworld which they called Sheol, where the dead were found in a shadowy existence until the day when God would set up His kingdom on earth with Jerusalem as its capital. The Old Testament Jew firmly believed in the final restoration of the world when there was to come a period of unending happiness and with the long hoped for Messiah as their king.

Thus we have noticed but a few of the many evidences of this universal belief in immortality, but it is not until we come to the New Dispensation that we first receive a clear and definite idea of the life beyond. It is in this period that we finally arrive at the climax of our conviction, in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This is the most satisfying of all hopes in the life beyond, for He who is the author and finisher of our faith hath said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." This belief is the proudest monument of the Christian religion. Deprive us of this belief, and we shall have a religion without hope. Nothing is of greater value than our supreme hope as expressed in these words.

Having thus given brief attention to these foregoing evidences of a belief in the immortality of the soul,

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may we now inquire more definitely as to why we as Christians place such strong faith in the life beyond.

First, we are convinced that our soul can never die because of its immediate origin. What is the origin of the soul? It is not of men. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and hence is destined to die. The soul's origin is found in the very breath of the everlasting God, who breathed into man and he became a living soul. You and I have within us the very breath of God and because it proceeds from God it cannot die, but like Him, must live on through all eternity. We have souls that can never die—do not forget that. The most cruel persecutors can only kill the body and after that they have no more that they can do—they cannot touch nor destroy the soul.

Again, we are convinced that our soul can never die because of its nature. The soul is not a combination of flesh and blood as is the body, but it is an indivisible spirit, free from every perishable substance. It is immaterial in its nature—that is, it is not composed of matter such as wood, earth or iron. These are material things which you can divide and cut into pieces. Not so the soul; it is out of the reach of every slaughtering weapon; the sharp arrow cannot penetrate it; nor the

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glittering spear pierce it; nor the two-edged sword divide it.

Again we are convinced of the immortality of the soul because of its powers and faculties. The understanding of man can take in things spiritual, and eternal, which it would not be capable of doing if it were not of the same nature itself present within us. Spiritual things would make no impression on us if there were not in us something to respond to this influence. The very fact that we are susceptible to spiritual things, bears evidence of a like nature in us, else there would be no response in us. Still again the knowledge we have of various things is very imperfect because of the brevity of life. This life is too short in which to fathom the endless depths of the great storehouse of knowledge. Hence we are justified in reasonably concluding that there must be a hereafter where we shall be able to finish and perfect that which we have left undone and imperfect when called out of this life. Surely the God who has aroused in us a longing after knowledge, will not at the end of this life deprive us of the vast unexplored territories of the infinite knowledge of eternity.

The will of man is always seeking the best possible

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good, in whichever form that may be. We all naturally desire complete happiness. There is none who does not desire to be happy in the fullest sense of the word. Now we all know that here on earth we never have absolute and complete happiness. There is no such thing as complete happiness here on earth. We may be happy at times, but it is not what you call real and lasting happiness. This world knows little of true and genuine happiness. Since then we cannot hope to have lasting and true happiness here, we are justified in expecting a future life in which we shall receive such joy as is not to be found here, but for which we have an earnest longing and a strong inclination. Surely the God who has implanted such a longing in man will also satisfy it, wherefore we may feel that our hope is not in vain.

Having thus given due thought to various reasons outside of God's word, may we now center our thought upon the Word itself and discover what it teaches concerning the life beyond. We read of Abraham that in dying he was gathered to his people, and of Jacob we read that he expected to meet his son Joseph in the spirit world. The record of the translation of Enoch and Elijah and the calling up of the spirit of



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Samuel testify to the general belief of the Old Testament world in a future conscious existence. Still more clear is the conviction of Job, who confesses, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and after my body is destroyed, then without my flesh shall I see God, whom I even I shall see." The Psalmist expects a deliverance of the righteous in saying, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption." Then coming to the New Testament we receive a deeper meaning of the promise of eternal life as offered by Christ and pledged by His own resurrection from the dead.

But it is noteworthy to realize that this promise of eternal life is invariably coupled with faith in Christ and communion with Him. In John we read: "He that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die." Christ, as none other, gave the words "life and death" a new meaning, when He said, "This is life eternal that they should know thee, the only true God, and Him whom thou hast sent, even Jesus Christ, and he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath eternal life and has passed out of death into life eternal." This, then, is all



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linked up with faith as the condition of eternal life. Thus the continued existence of the soul after death is clearly taught in the Bible.

“If the spirit that raised up Christ from the dead dwells in you, then follows the conclusion, that he who raised up Christ from the dead will also raise us into newness of life with Him.” To have the spirit of Christ in you is to fashion your life after His own blessed image, so that you may truthfully say, “It is not I that live, but Christ liveth in me.” If this be our confession, then Christ will be just and true in remembering us by acknowledging the glorious hope of the ages, “Because I live, ye shall live also.”

Nothing is so well received as Christ's victory over the last enemy that is to be destroyed. The world needed a Saviour to die for its sin, but it could not end there. It had to have a living Saviour. The problem as to who shall roll away the stone is solved. The stone is away; the tomb is open; and Christ liveth.

Henceforth there remains no shadow of a doubt as to the assurance of life beyond the grave; for all the clouds of uncertainty must pass from off the horizon with the rising of the Son of God from the tomb of death. See Him standing triumphant within

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the doorway of his vacant tomb, pointing back to Calvary, where he answered man's need. Hasten to the place where they lay Him as from the deep silence of the deserted tomb there rises a voice that echoes and re-echoes to all the ends of the earth—"Because I live, ye shall live also."

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